

ENGLANDS PETITION TO THEIR KING.

O R

An humble *Petition* of the distressed and almost destroyed Subjects of ENGLAND,
To the Kings most Excellent Majesty.

Containing (in the judgement of the wise) the very sense of all the true-hearted of the Kingdome; but because the way to the Kings care is stoppt, it was sent to LONDON, and there printed, as it is briefly declared to the Reader.

EXOD. 10. 7.

Knowest thou not yet that our Canaan is destroyed?

Printed on the day of *Jacobs* Trouble, and to make way (in hope) for his deliverance out of it.

Antiq. & E. 5. 3. ¹⁶⁴³ 1123 May 25. 1643.

For John Eliot, 1644

To the obvious not desired Reader.

GOOD Friend, We would have you know this Petition was intended onely for his Majesties view, but because plain dealing is seldome well taken, and his Majestie so guarded from the Requests of his Subjects, we are therefore forced to submit it to your common view, and to turne it out, in hope his Majesty may light of one Copie, and seriously reade it, and lay to heart the distresse of the miserable: if you censure it as the worke of some few discontented persons, Know you it is the sense of our part of the Kingdom, and if you will promise us freedome and hopes of successe, we'll soone retorne it you with the hands of 1000000. If you condemne us for speaking too plainly, Know that misery makes men forget good manners; and dying men use not complements; We are in the case of the Lepers, If we sit still we perish, therefore we will move in the way of hope, and goe in to the King, though it be not according to Law, and if we perish we perish. Yet know, we will come farre short of the plainnesse of better persons and times, 2 Sam. 12. 7. 1 King. 18. 18. &c. &c. &c.

To the Kings most Excellent Majesty;

The humble Petition of Your distressed and almost
destroyed Subjects of Your Kingdome of England.

READ SOVERAIGNE, Its a double grieſe to
Dour ſoules, that we ſhould be conſtrained to beg for
our lives at Your hands, who are bound by the Law
of God and nature, and by Your Oath, to preſerve
them, and that we ſhould be forced to entreat You
to ſpare our eſtates, liberties; and blood, whoſe ho-
nour and ſtrength depends ſo much on theſe our enjoyments: But
extremity prevaileth and drives us to You, and caſteth us here pro-
ſtrate at the feet of Your Maſteſtie: And let not Your Maſteſty be of-
fended, if we ſpeake more plainly then uſually becometh us; for ne-
ceſſitie hath no law: It is for our lives and more, and therefore blame
us not to ſpeake; our friends, our wives, our children, our wants, our
dangers, our Countrey, our blood, do all pierce our eares and hearts
with their daily & dolefull cries; Oh that our requests could finde
as quick acceſſe to Yours! Surely its impoſſible Your Maſteſty ſhould
be ignorant of the dolefull condition Your two Kingdomes are in;
Doe You not know that our houſes are plundered, and the fruit of
our long labours taken from us; that men who have heretofore re-
lieved hundreds of the poore, have not left them a bed to lye on,
food to ſuſtain them, or a houſe to put their heads in? And the poore
they were wont to relieve, are forced to become Souldiers, that they
may rob us by authoritie. Know You not how many thouſand di-
ſtreſſed ſoules cry to God day & night, in their anguiſh and miſery,
while they ſee You the Father of their Countrey, having no com-
paſſion on them? Oh! where is now Your Maſteſties ancient cle-
mency? You were wont if we loſt our eſtates by Pyrates, or but a
houſe by fire, to grant Your gracious Letters Patents for our re-
liefe; but now Your Souldiers rob us of all, and burne our houſes to

the ground, and this not onely for obtaining victory in heat of fight, but upon deliberation afterwards, as they did at *Brimingham in Warwickshire* by neere a hundred houses the next day when they left the Towne. You were wont to relieve Your Subjects when taken by Pyrates, and made Gally-slaves; and now the loathsome prisons of *Oxford*, and other places, are filled with their miserable, starved, diseased bodies, who (some of them) would think themselves halfe free-men were they Turkish Gally-slaves; such is their cruell usage. Know You not how our Lands lye untilled, while Your Souldiers take our horses by a thousand at a time? and what can follow this but extreame famine? Know You not how our bloud is spilt, & the dead bodies of Your Subjects, yea, many of your Nobles scattered as dung on the face of the earth? Have not your eyes seene it, & your eares heard the groanes of the wounded, gasping for life? Is all this nothing in your eyes? To whom should your people goe but to your Majesty in this our distresse? We have tryed all other known means, and professe in the sight of God, we know none but your Majestie, under God, that can deliver us without more bloud and desolation; and the world knows it is in your hands, you may doe it if you will; and doe it easily, and doe it with increase of your honour, safety, and happines. What if it were to part with something of your right, yet should not your Majesty doe it to save the life of your people, from whom, and for whose good, You first received it?

Dread Sovereigne, We beseech You consider, what hath your Parliament and people done, that deserves all this from You? Is it because your Parliament relieved us from oppressing Courts, and illegal taxations? Was it not with your own consent? and is it not your glory, to be King of a rich and free people? Is it because they prosecute Delinquents? Why, to what end are your Courts of Justice els? and are not they your chiefeest Court? And can those be friends to You, and worth the defending, that are enemies to your Kingdoms? For your Forts and Navy, are they not yours for your Kingdomes good? And is not your Parliament, the Kingdome representative? We know your Majesty cannot mannage them in your own person, but by your Ministers, and those chosen by Counsell; and can You

or the Kingdome possibly judge any more able, impartiall, and faithfull to advise You in this, then your Parliament? They medled not with it, till absolute necessitie constrained; till they saw *Ireland* in rebellion, the rebells threatening *England*, the same spirits as malignant and active at home, and their own lives and the Kingdome in present apparent jeopardy, and your Majesties consent to their Bill denyed. We cannot but see the same Counsell setting your Majesty against your Parliament now, which caused their so long discontinuance, which caused the Ship-money, and other illegall taxations, which caused the late innovations in Church and State, which caused the warre with *Scotland*, which broke up the last Parliament, and caused that invective Declaration against them, in the very language of the present times. We cannot possibly conceive what your Parliament can do now to remedy any of these miseries; they humbly seek your royall consent in vaine; the offenders legally proceeded against are defended from them, yea those that your Majesty hath proclaimed such; that is denied them which is yeelded to every the lowest court of Justice; they desire nothing more then your presence and concurrence; and we know if humble Petitions or loyall affections would procure it, there would not have been so long a distance. Neither is there any visible means left, but either give up our states, liberties, lives & Religion to the dispose of your too-long tryed secret Councell, and make your Majesties meere will the onely Law, and so betray their Countrey, and the trust committed to them; (which God forbid) or else defend us by the sword.

And for us your people, what have wee done that we are made a common spoyle? Would your Majesty desire us perfidiously to betray them whom we have trusted; and desert them that have been so faithfull to us? and to kill them whom wee have chosen to save us? and destroy those who are our selves representatively? Then should we be the disgrace of the *English* Nation, the reproach of our posteritie, the very shame of nature, and should presently expect some strange judgement of God, according to the strangeness of our offence. Its true, we are forced to take *Antidotes* against *Cesars*, rather to save our throats from the violence of desperate persons about

You; But we beseech You call not this bearing Arms against You; may be against your will; but if any of your now followers be more respective of your royall authoritie established by Law, more truly tender of your person and honour then we; then let not God prosper our proceedings, but cause us to fall before them, and give us up into their hands. We are fallen upon by the cruell, and because we will not dye quietly & without resistance, we are accused as traytors and enemies to your Majesty. We beseech your Majesty, consider in the presence of God, if your own Father & King had run upon you with his drawne sword, whether would You have suffered death without resistance, or have taken the sword *pro tempore* out of his hand? and yet neither be averse to his honour & person, or his propriety in his weapon. Doth not nature teach us the preservation of our selves? will not the eyewinke without deliberation? and the smallest worme turne back, if you tread on it? And beside nature, we have frequent presidents in sacred Writt, for even more then defensive resistance of Transcendent Monarcke, 1 Sam. 14. 44, 45: 1 Sam. 23. 11, 12. 2 King. 1. 10, 12, 13. 2 Chro. 26. 18, 20. Dan. 6. 14. &c. But if all this were nothing, yet we know your Majesty hath passed an act for the continuance of this Parliament: and sure that Act must needs meane a Parliament with its power and authoritie, and not the meere name and carkasse of a Parliament; Its not onely that they shall stay together in London, and doe nothing, or no more then another Court; but that they continue your chiefe Counsell, your chiefe Court, and have sole legislative power, which are your Parliaments peculiar properties: And if your Majesty hath enacted the continuance of a reall Parliament in its power, who seeth not that You have thereby joyned with them your royall authority, though not your person? Doth not your Majesty in your Expresses oft mention your selfe a part of the Parliament? and that the head without which the body cannot live; and is the Parliament valid without your authoritie? therefore if your Majesty may and have withdrowne from them your royall authoritie, then you may and have broke your own Lawes; which we dare not judge after so many solemne Protestations to maintaine and rule by the known Lawes: wherefore we hope your Majesty must needs

discerne that we fight not against You, but for your known established authority in Parliament. And we hope your Majesty will not deny them to be your entire Parliament; for is the Act recalled whereby they were established? if not, how can they cease to be your Parliament? neither let the fault be laid on part of them; for we all know the *Major* part hath the authority of the whole; and if it were the *Minor* part, why did not, or doth not the *Major* over-vote them? And we beseech your Majesty blame us not to thinke our Religion and all lyes at the stake, while we looke back by what a traine Popery had been almost brought upon us by that party, and see them still the chiefe in favour, and when so many Papists *English* and forreigne are now in Armes against us; and know no one Papist in the Land that is not zealous in the cause. Wonder not, *Dread Sovereigne*, if wee hardly beleevē that those come now to save us, who in 88. and the Powder Plott, would so cruelly have destroyed us: that Papists should be most zealous in fighting for the Protestant Religion, and Delinquents (proceeded against in Parliament,) should stand for the priviledges and Laws of the Parliament; that oppressing Monopolists should fight for the Subjects liberties, seem all riddles and paradoxes to us. Blame us not, we beseech You, to feare, while we see no contradiction appeare to Mounſieur de *Cheſne* his booke, sold openly for many yeares, not in *Paris* onely, but in *London*, and read at Court, which records your Majesties Letter to the Pope, promising to venturē Crowne and all to unite us to *Rome* againe.

Dread Sovereigne, many Princes have gone astray through strength of temptation, and after have been happy in repenting and returning; Oh that the *Lord* would make it your case, and glorifie his mercy on You and us, in making knowne to You the thing concerning our peace; and not his Justice in hardning You to destruction: that it may never be read in our Chronicle by the generations to come, that *England* had a Prince who lived and dyed in seeking the desolation of his people, and the Church of God. (Your Majesty knoweth there is a King & a Judge above You; before whom You must very shortly stand and give account of your Government; We desire You in the presence of that God, to thinke, and thinke seriously, and thinke againe

again how sad it will be, to have all this blood charged on your soule ; Can your Majesty thinke of this with comfort when You are dying ? Can these Counsellors that now put you on, then bring You as safely off ? Your Majesty may despise what we say, and cast away our Petition, and tread downe your poore people, and judge us your enemies, because we tell you the truth, and speake as dying men in the sorrow of our soules ; but You cannot so put by Divine Justice, or quiet conscience at the last : As true as the Lord liverh, your Majesty will one day know that Blasphemers, Papists, and flatterers, are not your friends ; but plaine dealers, who doe assure You, the way You take, tends to the utter ruine and destruction of your Selfe and Kingdome. And can *your heart endure*, or can *your hands be strong in the day* the Lord will reckon with *You* for *His* people committed to your charge ? Oh ! suppose You now heard the blood of your people already spilt, crying in your eares, and saw the many thousands yet living a life worse then death, lying in their sorrows at your feet, crying for pittie, help, oh King help, or we lose our liberties, Lawes, lives and Religion ; help that your Selfe and Royall posteritie, be not Princes of an impoverished desolate Nation : help as ever You would have God help You in the day of death and judgement, when your Selfe shall cry for helpe and pittie ; help that deliverance come not some other way, while You & your Fathers house are destroyed. The Lord God of our hopes, who hath for our sinnes most justly afflicted us in You, give your Majesty a discerning eye, a holy and tender heart, to yeeld to the Petition of your distressed Subjects, *To returne to and concurre with your Parliament*, that God and man may forget your mistakings, and You may be the blessedest Prince that ever reigned in our Land, the terrour of your reall enemies, the joy of your people, and the glory of posteritie ; Such shall be the daily and heartie prayers of

Your Majesties loyall (*how ever affected*) Subjects, &c.

FINIS.

